



Priorities to protect public health in the 2025 WV Legislative Session

WV Rivers is a nonprofit organization working to secure a healthy environment for all West Virginians. Here we highlight our top priorities to protect public health in the 2025 legislative session.

Category A drinking water protections Water Quality Standards (WQS) provide a legal basis to control water pollution in WV. Under the current WQS, public water supplies are designated as “Category A” waters to protect public health. However, the 2025 Legislature may move to delist Category A streams or limit them to a small area upstream from municipal water intakes. These changes could weaken pollution controls and jeopardize public water security across the state. Moreover, such changes are unnecessary because the WV Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) already has a process to change waterbody classifications on a case-by-case basis if justified.

Recommendation: Oppose removal of Category A waters and support the long-standing policy of protecting drinking water sources for current and future use.

Water quality standards for public health In 2015, EPA updated a list of “Priority Pollutants for Public Health” based on decades of toxicological and public health research¹, and the WV Legislature previously has supported regulating these pollutants to protect public health and safety. In the current legislative session, DEP proposes to incorporate 6 Priority Pollutants in WQS, including carcinogenic compounds such as DDE², and we commend DEP for this proposed change. Nonetheless, DEP excludes additional Priority Pollutants that also should be regulated for public health and safety. For example, isophorone is a carcinogenic compound that can contaminate water from industrial manufacturing³ but is excluded from the current proposal before the Legislature. We believe that regulation of all EPA priority pollutants is a common-sense step necessary to protect public health for all WV communities. Learn more about those pollutants [here](#).

Recommendation: Support the inclusion of all EPA Priority Pollutants for Public Health in WQS.

¹ www.epa.gov/wqc/national-recommended-water-quality-criteria-human-health-criteria-table

² www.regulations.gov/document/EPA-HQ-OW-2014-0135-0194

³ www.regulations.gov/document/EPA-HQ-OW-2014-0135-0188

Community Science We believe that all West Virginians have the right to monitor air and water quality to protect themselves, their families, and their neighbors. Over the last several years, community-supported air quality sensors have been deployed across the state in homes, schools, and churches to monitor particulate matter and other hazardous airborne pollutants. This community-supported monitoring network is currently being used with success to supplement data from DEP air quality stations that are sparsely distributed across the state. In 2024, the WV Legislature rejected a bill that would have restricted DEP's use of community air monitoring data, and a similar bill is expected to come before the 2025 Legislative session. As before, we maintain that restricting the use of community air monitoring would undercut vital information to protect public health and could undermine public trust and engagement with state agencies. Moreover, the proposed change is unnecessary because DEP does not use community-generated air quality data for regulatory purposes.

Recommendation: Oppose new restrictions for community air monitoring data in WV.